

EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (EPMS) CRITERIA

IMPLEMENTATION

Agencies must have a policy which complies with the outlined criteria by July 1, 1999. Implementation of the agency policy which complies with this criteria shall be initiated in all agencies no later than July 1, 1999, and shall be appropriately communicated to all employees.

The Office of Human Resources (OHR) must approve each agency's performance management policy prior to implementation.

GENERAL INFORMATION

All performance appraisals shall be conducted and documented by the employee's supervisor (the rater) who has direct experience or knowledge of the work being performed. The appraisal shall be reviewed by the next higher level supervisor (the reviewer), unless the rater is the agency head, prior to the appraisal being discussed with the employee.

The reviewer has the authority to change the appraisal completed by the rater unless the agency's policy, approved by the Office of Human Resources, provides otherwise.

The final appraisal must bear the signature of the rater, the reviewer, and the employee, if possible. If any party refuses to sign the appraisal, a notation shall be made on the performance appraisal of this. If possible, a witness should sign to acknowledge that the party refused to sign the appraisal.

All performance appraisals shall become a permanent part of the employee's official personnel file. Upon request, the agency shall furnish the employee with a copy of the planning stage and the final appraisal form.

The Office of Human Resources addresses the appraisal process of both probationary and covered employees through the provisions of this criteria. Although not mentioned specifically in this criteria, employees exempt from coverage under the State Employee Grievance Procedure Act should also be given annual performance appraisals.

COMPONENTS OF THE EPMS

The components of the EPMS are the planning stage, ongoing performance management, and the evaluation stage. Each employee should have a planning stage conducted at the beginning of each rating period. During the planning stage the performance expectations should be determined, communicated to the employee, and documented on the appraisal form. Ongoing performance management involves continuous communication between the employee and supervisor throughout the year, as well as the management of substandard performance. Finally, the evaluation stage encompasses the completion of the appraisal document and its communication to the employee prior to the end of the review period.

COMPONENTS OF THE APPRAISAL FORM

The components of the appraisal form are job functions (which include job duties and success criteria), objectives, and performance characteristics. These components should be discussed and documented during the planning stage. The employee's job functions (which include job duties and success criteria) shall be determined by reviewing the employee's position description. An objective should be included when an employee is assigned a special, non-recurring project or assignment that is not included on the employee's position description. Objectives are optional for all employees. The statement outlining the job function(s) and/or objective(s) should include descriptive information about the performance expectations (success criteria) of the rater. The descriptive statement should specify the expectations of the rater for the employee to meet performance requirements. Each job function and/or objective shall be rated in the evaluation stage based on the four levels of performance unless the agency's policy, approved by the Office of Human Resources, provides otherwise. It shall be mandatory for all raters to be evaluated on the timely completion of each employee's performance appraisal. The performance characteristic component shall be used as a communication tool to emphasize those characteristics that are important to success in performing the job functions and objectives included in the planning stage document. Performance characteristics shall be defined in the planning stage and rated as "acceptable" or "unacceptable" in the evaluation stage. The performance characteristics section shall not be weighted in the determination of the overall performance rating unless the agency's policy, approved by the Office of Human Resources, provides otherwise. It shall be mandatory for all managers and supervisors to be rated on the performance characteristic of "promoting equal opportunity."

LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE

Unless the agency's policy, approved by the Office of Human Resources, provides otherwise, there shall be four levels of performance to rate each job duty and objective and to rate overall performance:

1. Substantially Exceeds Performance Requirements
Work that is characterized by exemplary accomplishments throughout the rating period; performance that is considerably and consistently above the criteria of the job function.
2. Exceeds Performance Requirements
Work that is above the criteria of the job function throughout the rating period.
3. Meets Performance Requirements
Work that meets the criteria of the job function.
4. Below Performance Requirements
Work that fails to meet the criteria of the job function.

Performance characteristics shall not be rated by the four levels of performance, but shall be given a rating of acceptable or unacceptable unless the agency's policy, approved by the Office of Human Resources, provides otherwise.

PROBATIONARY PERIOD

Each new employee in probationary status shall be rated prior to the completion of a twelve month probationary period for noninstructional personnel, of the academic year duration for instructional personnel except for faculty at state technical colleges, or of not more than two full academic years' duration for faculty at state technical colleges. If that employee does not receive a performance appraisal prior to the performance review date, that employee will receive a "meets performance requirements" rating by default and obtain covered status as a State employee and permanent status in the class. The performance review date marks the beginning of a new review period. The probationary period may not be extended. If an employee is not performing satisfactorily during the probationary period, the employee shall be terminated before becoming a covered employee. Until an employee has completed the probationary period and has a "meets performance requirements" or higher overall rating on the employee's performance evaluation, the employee has no grievance rights under the State Employee Grievance Procedure Act.

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

All employees shall be given an annual appraisal no more than 90 calendar days prior to the employee's performance review date. An agency may require more frequent appraisals in its policy, subject to approval by the Office of Human Resources. If an employee does not receive an appraisal prior to the performance review date, the employee shall receive a "meets performance requirements" rating by default. The performance review date marks the beginning of a new review period. A covered employee may not be issued an overall "below performance requirements" appraisal at any time during the annual review period without following the "Substandard Performance Process."

TRIAL PERIODS

Each covered employee who has been demoted, promoted, or reclassified shall be appraised prior to the completion of a six month trial period in the position. If an employee does not receive a performance appraisal prior to the performance review date, the employee will receive a "meets performance requirements" rating by default and obtain permanent status in the new class. The performance review date marks the beginning of a new review period. The trial period may be extended up to 90 calendar days upon written notice to the employee prior to the end of the trial period.

The "Substandard Performance Process" is not required to demote or reclassify downward an employee in trial status to the same class from which promoted, if the demotion or reclassification occurs within the trial period. The "Substandard Performance Process" is also not required to demote or reclassify downward an employee in trial status to a class in an equal or higher pay band from which promoted, if the demotion or reclassification occurs within the trial period. The employee in trial status may not be terminated or demoted to a class in a lower pay band than that from which promoted for performance reasons without following the "Substandard Performance Process."

SUBSTANDARD PERFORMANCE PROCESS FOR COVERED EMPLOYEES

- a. A rater shall issue a "Warning Notice of Substandard Performance" prior to issuing a "below performance requirements" rating to a covered employee. If during the performance period an employee is considered "below performance requirements," in any essential job function or objective which significantly impacts performance, the rater shall provide the employee with a written "Warning Notice of Substandard Performance." The warning notice shall provide for an improvement period of no less than 30 days and no more than 120 days. The warning notice may be issued at any time during the review period. Ordinarily, the warning period may not extend beyond the employee's performance review date. However, if the warning notice is issued less than 30 days before the employee's performance review date, the performance review date would roll forward a day for each day the warning notice is in effect.
- b. During the warning period, the employee and the rater shall have regularly scheduled meetings during which they shall discuss the employee's progress. Documentation is required to verify that these counseling sessions were held.
- c. If the employee's performance is rated "meets performance requirements" or above, on all essential job functions or objectives, which significantly impact performance, noted in the warning notice by the end of the warning period, employment shall continue. If the employee is rated "below performance requirements," on any essential job function or objective which significantly impacts performance as noted in the warning notice by the end of the warning period, the employee shall be removed from the position immediately (i.e., terminated, reassigned, demoted).
- d. Once a time frame for improving substandard performance has been given, the employee must receive a written appraisal prior to the end of the warning period or the employee will receive a "meets performance requirements" rating by default.
- e. If an employee has been issued two warning notices within a 365 day period and performance drops to a substandard level on any essential job function or objective which significantly impacts performance for a third time within a 365 day period, the employee shall be removed from the position upon the third recurrence of such substandard performance by issuing the "below performance requirements" appraisal. A warning notice is not required on the third occurrence.

WARNING NOTICE OF SUBSTANDARD PERFORMANCE

The requirements of a "Warning Notice of Substandard Performance" are:

- a. The notice shall be in writing, addressed to the employee, labeled as a "Warning Notice of Substandard Performance," and signed by the employee (witnessed, if employee will not sign).
- b. The notice shall list the job function(s) and/or objective(s) included on the employee's planning document that are considered "below performance requirements," with an explanation of the deficiencies for each job function and/or objective.

c. The notice shall include the time period for improvement and the consequences if no improvement is noted (i.e., termination, demotion, reassignment).

d. The notice shall include a plan for meetings to discuss employee progress during the warning period.

A copy of the notice shall be given to the employee and placed in the employee's official personnel file.

EPMS OPTIONS TOOLBOX

An agency may determine that using any or all of the following options would assist in conducting performance management.

- ? An agency may link the employee's performance evaluation to the agency's or work unit's mission. Space will be provided on the EPMS form to include such mission statements.
- ? An agency may link the performance evaluation to the employee's training plan. A sample training plan document is available from the Office of Human Resources.
- ? An agency may consider "competencies" and "performance characteristics" as synonymous terms for EPMS purposes. Competencies or performance characteristics are qualities, traits, or individual characteristics that are required for satisfactory performance in a particular job, role, or team.
- ? An agency may use a numerical weighting system to establish the importance of job functions and objectives for purposes of evaluation. A sample weighted system is available from the Office of Human Resources.
- ? An agency may require more frequent evaluations than is required by the criteria. Such a requirement must be incorporated in its EPMS policy, which requires OHR approval.
- ? An agency may determine that it does not want the reviewer to have the authority to change the rater's rating. If this is the case, the agency must incorporate this limitation into its EPMS policy, which requires OHR approval.
- ? An agency may use a "multiple sources" of feedback system. If it does, the particular system chosen must be included in the agency's EPMS policy, which requires OHR approval.
- ? An agency may develop alternative systems (i.e., more or fewer levels of performance) to rate employee performance. However, evaluation systems that have more or fewer levels of performance than the four levels of performance must include a conversion mechanism to equate those systems to the four levels of performance should this be necessary (RIF or legislatively mandated reasons, for example). This system and the conversion mechanism must be incorporated into the agency's EPMS policy, which requires OHR approval.

- ? An agency may elect to substitute team evaluations for individual performance appraisals. If an agency determines to do this, such change would need to be incorporated into the agency's EPMS policy, which requires OHR approval.
- ? An agency may use a Universal Review Date for the entire agency or a clearly separate organizational unit of the agency. The use of a Universal Review Date must be stipulated in the agency's EPMS policy before implementation, which requires OHR approval.
- ? An agency may elect to weigh and rate performance characteristics as part of the agency's performance management system. If an agency determines to do this, such change would need to be incorporated into the agency's EPMS policy, which requires OHR approval.
- ? An agency may combine the employee position description and performance management document into a single document. In addition to Office of Human Resources approval, consultation with the Budget and Control Board's State Printing Office may be required.